

Background Paper

INF PROSPECTS IN EUROPE

1. Prospects for deployment will depend on the extent to which Europe and governments consider INF worth accepting some risk of civil disorder and their judgment of whether the US has negotiated in Geneva in good faith.

2. No European government has reneged on the decision (although Denmark has frozen its contribution to INF infrastructure costs), but European publics remains uneasy and new obstacles may arise before implementation.

3. The USSR will increasingly play on European anxieties to influence the INF debate.

FRG

- Opposition will increase as December 1983 deployment date nears; serious violence and civil disobedience are possible.
- The present government, if it survives new elections, will go ahead with deployment, in the absence of progress in Geneva; but in the meantime it may show signs of interest in negotiating a greater-than-zero formula.

Italy

- The new Fanfani government has confirmed that Italy will proceed with cruise-missile basing in the absence of arms-control progress; possible elections next year could, however, make INF a more serious issue.

- The anti-nuclear movement does not have the strength and organization typical of northern Europe, but its activities will increase as deployment approaches; Communist support for the movement will probably remain relatively restrained.

UK

- The government remains committed to deployment, but opinion polls for the first time show a majority of Britons opposing INF modernization.
- Some Tories are becoming nervous about the effects of deployment on probable elections in 1983. This might lead to requests for postponing the advance arrival of INF equipment or even a dual-key release arrangement.

Belgium

- The government has not yet announced it is prepared to move ahead with deployment, but it has permitted preparatory work to proceed.
- Anti-nuclear sentiment is strongest in Flanders, and the missile site is in Wallonia; nevertheless, Brussels will carefully assess general public opinion, the status of the Geneva negotiations, and prospects in the other basing countries before making a final decision.

Netherlands

- Public hostility remains high, and it is questionable that a parliamentary majority for deployment can be found -- despite the new center-right Christian Democrat - Liberal coalition government.
- The government may seek to postpone further a deployment decision, but in the meantime allow preparations for receiving the missiles to proceed.